Protest by BSNL Officers

†192. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Officers of BSNL had expressed their protest by observing silence at Rajghat in December, 2002;

(b) if so, what are their demands; and

(c) Governments reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Their demands *inter-alia* includes extension of five year limit for deemed deputation, continuous recruitment to 'Indian Telecom Service' cadre through Union Public Service Commission, cadre review of Indian Telecom Service, upgradation of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited Board & financial viability of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited.

(c) The demands of the Officers of the BSNL are under the consideration in consultation with the concerned Departments/Ministries. To ensure the financial viability of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited, the Government has agreed to provide certain package of measures *viz.,* moratorium on repayment of principal and interest upto 31.3.04 on Government loans, exemption from payment of dividend on preference share capital upto 31.3.2004. BSNL will also enjoy 50% and 25% waiver on dividend due on equity for the years 2002-03 and 2003-04 respectively. Payment of license fee and spectrum charges by Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited will be set off against reimbursements upto 31.3.2003 on loses incurred on account of rural telephony operations or other socially desirable projects.

Telecom Racket

†193. SHRIMATI KUM KUM RAI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn towards the

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.